THE BLAST

LYDIA GIBSON

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PARTNERS

Partners

I GLANCED casually out of my window. The little stretch of park facing my room looked like a living oasis of green bordered by dull cemented gray. The sun shone warm upon the turf, coaxing the women and children of the neighborhood into the open. Soon the grass was dotted with the young ones romping on the green. Their merry voices floated toward me, and my heart echoed their joy.

I was watching the kites gracefully swimming in the air, and the boys below shouting with glee as some ambitious kite would shoot like an arrow upward, outdistancing its competitors. Suddenly I noticed a commotion in the park. Men and boys were running toward the street, and in a moment a dense crowd blocked the traffic From the elevation of my window on the upper floor I could see an irregular opening in the center of the crowd and the figure of a man lying on his face. I rushed into the street. With some difficulty I forced my way through the constantly swelling crowd, till I reached the figure on the ground. I touched it, and the man slowly raised himself on his elbow. His hat had fallen from his head and the bright sun shone fully on his disheveled gray hair. His face was pinched with want and in his eyes I saw the hopeless look of misery.

I felt the crowd give about me. A policeman elbowed his way to the old man. "What's the matter?" he demanded, taking hold of the man's shoulder.

"I must have fainted," the man said weakly.

"Out of work?" some one in the crowd asked.

"Yes. Long time."

A young urchin handed the policeman an old weatherworn derby. "Here's his hat," he said sympathetically.

The officer placed it on the old man's head. "Where do you live?" he asked.

"I have no home."

The crowd became hushed. The policeman hesitated a moment. "Come with me, then," he said at last.

He assisted the old man to his feet. The crowd silently parted, making a narrow lane between two living walls. The officer, supporting his charge, stepped toward the street. But as the old man was crossing the curb he suddenly collapsed. His arm slipped from the policeman's grip and he fell in the street.

"Case of starvation," said some one in the crowd.

The policeman glanced around. There was no telephone station in sight. A look of worry crossed his face. "He may be croakin'," I heard him say under his breath.

The sound of an approaching automobile seemed to bring inspiration. The officer jumped into the street and halted the large shiny carriage. Edging my way closer, I caught a glimpse of a beautiful young woman in fashionable attire, accompanied by a gentleman of advanced age. I noticed his immaculate dress and superior manner as he stepped out of the machine. He spoke with irritation: "I am afraid we'll be late for luncheon, but if the man isn't drunk we'll take him to the hospital."

Several men meanwhile lifted the old fellow from the ground and were carrying him to the carriage. The girl raised herself from her seat as they were placing the unconscious form into the machine. Her bright eyes were eagerly following the scene. Suddenly she caught the rays of the sun playing on the waxlike features of the old man. "Oh, father!" she cried, "it's Jones—Jones, who worked in our mill!"

The crowd surged toward the carriage. "Stand back!" commanded the officer. He motioned to the chauffeur. "Charity Hospital! Quick!"

The Wailing of Wilson & Co.

Warren Van Valkenburgh

ANY person who is possessed of sufficient meanness to suspect the undertaker of praying for good business would probably be inconsiderate enough to infer that Hudson Maxim wrote "Defenseless America" for a similar motive; or that the House of Morgan is financially interested in the export of munitions; or that Woodrow Wilson meant German sympathizers in his "creatures of passion" speech. Who owns so warped an intellect as to conceive of such base designs is mentally derelict. He is worse. He is unpatriotic, and that is the crowning sin of all nations.

The American public is easily aroused by any means that do not require mental exertion. Thus while they attend the movies the politicians at Washington plan the bartering away of their destinies.

The prospect of an annual expenditure of five hundred million dollars will have little deterrent effect on that body of patriotic word mongers that the people have selected to guide the ship of State.

The recent amorous experience of the blushing old lover of the White House must surely have blinded him to the creed of neutrality which he so lately enunciated to his citizens, because in that memorable address to Congress he threw all discretion to the winds when he directed his venom toward those "who have uttered threats against our national peace * * * within our own borders." The professor wants adequate laws to crush those who dare assail "the honor and self-respect of the nation."

The time is coming when it won't be safe to have an appetite for frankfurters lest it be considered an evidence of disloyalty to an anti-German administration.

Aside from the suggestion to seal every lip that speaks in opposition to the party in power there is a very subtle and cleverly hidden cue that Congress get busy with a Defense of the Realm Act, made in America.

This hint is embodied in Wilson's reference to the transportation problem. If the suggested committee be appointed to ascertain the best means of obtaining Federal

control of the railroads—and the best excuse for doing it—it will result in eventual dominance of railroad employees by the U. S. Government. This would place each man under federal jurisdiction; and, in time of stress render the railroad workers as much victims of State tyranny as ever the renegade Briand did in France during the C. G. T. strike a few years ago. The transportation workers could, were they willing to do it, so completely tie up the entire national commerce that military maneuvres would be impossible. Make a Federal case of it, and such an event as a strike would be considered as nothing less than *lèse majesté*. Such is the plan of Wilson to maintain the integrity of free institutions that exist only on paper.

The President should be given credit, however, for having been frank enough to tell the truth as to why he wants a citizen army of four hundred thousand men. It is not because of the fear of invasion by a foreign foe bent on destroying the glorious liberties of America. It is to protect the business men's interests, and Mr. Wilson says so. For that reason he calls upon the employers to make it desirable for their employees to join this citizen army. This is an admission that should accrue to Wilson many congratulations from those in whose defense he pleads.

Wilson and the other champions of preparedness have at last let out the public secret that Germany is jealous of our lordship over South America and that Japan wants the Philippines. Moreover, they hint that England, too, would bear watching. They have turned over some pages that any casual acquaintance with history knows by heart and bared the chameleon-like Nationalism of all the great powers that fought against each other at one time and with each other at another. This in itself should shed some light on the patriotic prevarication of one country being better than another, for if all wars are defensive—which they are to each individual country involved—then such a thing as an aggressive war cannot be and no nation should prepare for defense. A nation cannot defend itself if it is not attacked; therefore if none are aggressive there can be no war. There is not a country in Europe today that will admit that it is waging an aggressive struggle. And yet the war goes on.

But the militarists give us an idea of why we must prepare for trouble. It is because of our commercial dominance of the American continent. We must increase our armaments to protect the South American markets from German competition. Hundreds of young fools must accept the yoke of American militarism so that our business men may expand their trade and exclude all others from doing the same thing.

All the Congressional debates in the world will not mitigate the war peril, for no nation is yet ready for arbitration nor is there any likelihood that any nation ever will be. No nation, then, can lay claim to civilization, for civilized people are willing to discuss dissensions. The germ of civilization lies not in the ranks of the rulers. It lies in the palms of the people.

The workers can have no interest in the present war propaganda other than so far as they are personally concerned. The countries belong to the masters of wealth and position, and they alone should defend them. But of course they won't as long as the people can be reached by such empty appeals as those now being made in Washington and being circulated in censored shape for public consideration, and the worst of it all is that whether they approve of the stupendous expense of increasing the national defenses or not, they must pay the fiddler anyway.

It would seem that the most effective way to end any objectionable war and at the same time put fear in the hearts of the tyrants on high is to follow the advice of the clever critic who recently said, "Shoot the officers and go on home." It's worth trying, anyway.

The Ass and His Master

Fredericka Madsen

SERENE and calm he toils on terror's brink,
His lightning-brain and steel-nerve never shrink;
Creating ALL—yet—stalked by want and dread
He thanks YOU meekly for his crust of bread.

YOU feed upon his woe, his shame, his need,
As vultures 'pon a scarce-dead carcass feed;
And heap with taunts and insults rare and new
This million-headed ass who toils for YOU.

And yet he hopes for JUSTICE thru YOUR law,—
A lamb might find that in a tiger's claw.
The State and Court, from judge to spying tool,
All damn him as a weak and vicious fool.

Yet sometimes—from this stupid, slavish pack,
A HERO-SOUL dares fling YOUR violence back;
YOU quake—and rend him with YOUR law and lies
Seeking to kill *that* which all death defies.

The Vice of Moderation

I AM aware that many object to the severity of my language; but is there not cause for severity? I will be as harsh as Truth, and as uncompromising as Justice. On this subject I do not wish to think, or speak, or write, with moderation. No! No! Tell a man whose house is on fire to give a moderate alarm; tell him to moderately rescue his wife from the hands of the ravisher; tell the mother to gradually extricate her babe from the fire into which it has fallen—but urge me not to use moderation in a cause like the present. I am in earnest—I will not equivocate—I will not excuse—I will not retreat a single inch—and I will be heard. The apathy of the people is enough to make every statue leap from its pedestal and hasten the resurrection of the dead.

—William Lloyd Garrison

Man vs. State

AS there is no social sensorium, it results that the welfare of the aggregate, considered apart from that of the units, is not an end to be sought. The society exists for the benefit of its members; not its members for the benefit of the society. It has ever to be remembered that, great as may be the efforts made for the prosperity of the body politic, yet the claims of the body politic are nothing in themselves and become something only in so far as they embody the claims of its component individuals.

—Herbert Spencer

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Comments

To Our Friends

THE ALARM, of Chicago, and the REVOLT, of New York, have been suppressed. Do you want THE BLAST to continue to exist? If you think this paper worth while, it's up to you to support it. We can't do it alone. Your letters of praise are very encouraging, but they will not pay the printer's bills. Assistance is needed at once. Don't put this aside and forget all about it. Show your interest and appreciation by your immediate response.

It Hurts

THE BLAST is making 'em real mad. The printer who did the first issues of this paper has refused to continue. He told us quite plainly that his "Catholic and other customers wouldn't stand for it." We had to find another printer.

In this connection it is significant that the two official labor papers of San Francisco have refused us the customary courtesy of exchanging copies with THE BLAST. Incidentally, one of these papers is published at our former printer's.

Wouldn't it be funny if THE BLAST'S bitterest enemies were found, not among the capitalists, but in the ranks of labor?

If the crooked labor politicians feel hurt, THE BLAST is striking in the right spot.

Inviting Violence

THE Federal government has suppressed *The Alarm*, of Chicago, and the *Revolt*, of New York. We are not going to say that it is an outrage. Why should the government not commit outrages? Invasion of personal liberty, suppression of free speech and free press, silencing non-conformists and protestants, shooting down rebellious workers —all this is of the very essence of government.

We don't complain. We understand Wilson's position. He must do his master's bidding. This is the "sane policy." But we want to warn the weather cock in the White House that it may not prove *safe*. Suppression of the voice of discontent leads to assassination. *Vide* Russia.

Golden Rule Mush

A CORRESPONDENT writes: "Why not agitate *loving* each other into goodness instead of kicking each other into it?" This with reference to capital and labor.

The Golden Rule again. Turn the other cheek. Lick the hand that smites you. Tell the dispossessed widow, groveling in the street there with her half dozen starving kids, to love her landlord.

That's the morality that is making slaves of us. It is breeding weaklings, mollycoddles, too spineless to resist.

There is too much of this mushy talk, especially among so-called radicals. Not greater love but more hate we need. A strong, red-blooded hatred of everything that makes for injustice and oppression. Hatred of every factor, social and human, that upholds and perpetuates the love of slavery and chains.

"Ah, but we hate conditions, not persons," the goody-goody people tell us. Rot! You can't divorce conditions from the persons who support them and profit by them.

I hate them both.

Good Slaves

THE manufacturers of the South love the children of their employees. They are exerting every effort to give the little kids a chance to work in the factories.

They also know that their employees love their bosses. So they have been circulating a petition among the workers protesting against the Keating-Owen child labor bill now before Congress. And a good many of the miserable wretches have actually signed the petition.

Darling slaves. How they love their masters. Their just reward is awaiting them in Heaven.

Resistance Tempers Tyranny

THE Federal government at last dismissed the charges against Margaret Sanger. "Margaret Sanger is victorious!" writes our New York correspondent; "the right of woman to own and control her own body has been established."

We do not share our friend's optimism. It was publicity—the numerous protests written and wired to the authorities—that forced the government to "have another think." All government is cowardly. It possesses only the courage of the bully to intimidate the weak. If you realize your strength and have the courage to manifest it, the government bully will slink away. *Resistance tempers tyranny.*

That the *cause* of Margaret Sanger is not victorious is shown by the arrest of Emma Goldman in New York, on the charge of spreading Birth Control information. Very likely the authorities think that her case will give them less trouble. She is an Anarchist, and they figure that her persecution will not arouse as much public protest as the attempted suppression of Margaret Sanger.

The same agitation and protest that forced the government to dismiss the Sanger charges must be repeated in the case of Comrade Goldman. Realize the importance of this suggestion. Act accordingly and at once. Start a campaign of publicity. Hold mass meetings and wire protests, collective and individual, to Emma Goldman, care District Attorney, New York City.

We strongly urge the same mode of action in the case of Enrico and Ricardo Flores Magon, now in the Los Angeles jail. It is action that is needed, now. Never mind waiting for the trial. Trial means conviction: there is no more justice for the modern rebel in the courts of capital than there was for the Nazarene in the court of Pilate.

Life Is Vision and Vision Is Life

Harry Kelly

THE article by C. E. S. Wood in a recent issue of THE BLAST on "Life is Vision," and the editorial in *Organized Labor* on "Labor is Life—Not Vision," were thought-provoking and well worth while. They voice the eternal conflict between the ideal and the reality; each point of view is true and, taken together, represent the whole truth—at least it seems so to me.

In a discussion of social questions the welfare of particular individuals becomes of very minor importance, but to discuss social questions without having regard for particular individuals is to fall into the fatal error of discussing the whole without reference to its constituent parts. To tell "labor" it must organize and stand solid if it would emancipate itself from the domination of the parasitic class, is to make a statement that is absolutely incontrovertible. When we analyze this statement, however, we find that "labor" is a mass of units with individual interests, standards of living and even different attitudes toward the whole of which they are a part. In discussing the relation of capital and labor the sociologist speaks of the two as if they were separate organisms or different species with aims diametrically opposed to each other: capital's aim to prey upon labor and labor's aim to emancipate itself from the domination of capital. The status of labor and capital may be fixed, but the status of the laborer and capitalist fluctuates; within the space of one's own life-time the individual can belong to both camps. It is this mass of conflicting interests, standards of living and general culture that makes it impossible for "labor" ever to stand together in the sense that we generally use that term.

Twenty years ago the writer knew men who believed in the solidarity of labor in the personal sense; that is, they believed the day of awakening was at hand and "labor" was about to rise, overthrow the capitalist and take possession of the land and means of life. These individuals had various theories of social reconstruction, ranging from State Socialism to Individualist Anarchism, but all believed in according to the laborer the full fruits of his or her toil. Who does not remember those ardent believers in the coming of "The Day" when the social revolution would break out and "labor" come into its own? Some remember our calm, logical Individualist Anarchists who became so enthusiastic over the Bryan movement of 1896, as to vote for "16 to 1." Not that they believed the latter would bring any particular benefit, but they thought the campaign would have a tremendous educational value and "the next big battle would be over Mutual Banking or Free Money."

Twenty-five years have passed, the social revolution has not come and "Mutual Banking" is as dead as the roses of last summer, at least so far as it enters into the calculation of reformers, revolutionists or "labor." Men and women once active in the reform and revolutionary movements believe as ardently now as then that "labor" could, if it stood shoulder to shoulder, establish any form of social relationship it desired. Nevertheless they have dropped out of the movement and now attend to their own private affairs. This does not mean recantation or a repudiation of former ideals. It does, in some cases of course; but not in all. In fact, it is fairly safe to say that an uprising that had even a remote chance of success would bring to its support many thousands of those now living in retirement. We can call them cowards some other time, but just now let us devote ourselves to discussing them as social factors. Without losing faith in the ideal of a free humanity or the potentiality of "labor," they have come to realize that exploitation in some form or other has existed for a great many centuries and in all probability would not be abolished in their time.

Participation in the revolutionary movement does not, as a rule, increase individual incomes. But the holding of higher ideals often brings with it a desire for better food, clothes and houses and artistic desires which mean increased expenditure; and this makes the struggle to live harder than ever. It is this struggle between the ideal of a free humanity and the desire to live and enjoy life *now* that saps the vitality and soothes the emotions until they slacken, and in many cases causes them to die away entirely.

To urge men and women to enter the ranks of the revolutionists and emancipate themselves, by telling them "labor" can establish any form of social relation they wish if laborers only practice solidarity, is to convey the idea that if the individual addressed acts in a given manner the rest of "labor" would act likewise. It is on a par with the Socialists telling men to "vote for socialism and vote for a job." Men may, and have, voted for socialism for twenty or thirty years—so I am told—without getting a job as a result of that practice, and men and women can and do work for the social revolution all their lives and remain economic slaves to the end. "Labor" has as many conceptions of freedom as man has fancies, and to speak of what it can do if it acted as one man is to overlook the fact that it represents every reactionary idea and superstition extant as well as every ideal and noble impulse. Political Socialists and Social Revolutionists are fond of saying "the working class must emancipate itself," and nine times out of ten they select members of the bourgeois class, or educated proletarians inoculated with bourgeois conceptions and instincts, to represent them inside and outside of parliament or legislature. This may be good as a battle cry, but very few people seriously believe the working class will emancipate itself by itself. "Labor" as labor will probably never act as one man on any subject; its impulses and actions are and will be determined by small groups of idealists *inside* and *outside* the labor movement—this notwithstanding that the soldiers of the revolution, i. e., the units that compose the army, will consist of individuals acting from different impulses, inspired by different motives. Some will be inspired by the ideal of a free humanity, others by the desire to improve their own standard of comfort and to get some of the good things of life now denied them. The idealist is necessary because he has social consciousness and uplifts the revolution; his faith in man is a powerful factor toward progress. The realist soldier who struggles to obtain his own, furnishes the necessary bitterness to tear down outworn systems, destroy idols and root out superstitions. To urge men to work for the emancipation of "labor" is to ask them to work for an ideal, and while working for an ideal furnishes emotional satisfaction; more than that is necessary for people to live. To urge them to work solely for their material benefit is to rob them of the ideal without which man can not exist. Without labor life is impossible; thus Life is Labor. But without Vision life is equally impossible; therefore, to me, "Life is Labor and Labor is Vision."

"THIS war was brought on by rulers, not by peoples, and I thank God that there is no man in America who has the authority to bring war on without the consent of the people."
—PRESIDENT WILSON

If, as Wilson says, this wholesale murder called war was brought on by rulers, rulers ought to be abolished.

No people ever gave their express consent to a war. Here in the United States, as elsewhere, the people are systematically miseducated by prostitute editors, and smug statesmen controlled by high finance are the real rulers of the nation. Here, too, our rulers are preparing to lead us like sheep to slaughter.

If Romans had not been sheep, Caesar would not have been a wolf.

The Real Labor Problem

THIS is a conservative article inspired by an eminently conservative and deadly respectable journal, the *British Review*. The *B. R.* is shy on editors, two of them holding commissions in His Majesty's Army. (Being of the "upper clawsses" entitles a man to a commission, though he couldn't fight a sick butterfly.)

So the *British Review* advertises for an editor of the following attainments:

1. Intelligent sympathy with the traditions of Christian Civilization in Europe. (Christian Civilization is doing fine in Europe just now.)

2. Good knowledge of continental movements and affairs, a qualification rare in itself and rarer still in an Englishman of a conservative temperament. (Knowledge of Great Britain seems unnecessary.)

3. High standard of English scholarship coupled with that degree of familiarity with Latin and Greek classics which distinguishes the educated from the uneducated. (Latin makes a gentleman.)

We mention this because the *British Review* has an article entitled "The Real Labor Problem," which shows that a man with a little knowledge of home affairs, particularly as regards Labor, might not be out of place on its editorial staff.

Since the attitude of Labor in Great Britain on several occasions has threatened to upset the traditions the bourgeoisie loves so much, even high-brow papers like the *B. R.* condescend to discuss such vulgar topics as Labor. The writer in the *British Review*, E. T. Good, who confesses to having labored in days of yore, says that the "real labor problem is to make the average workman reasonably contented with his lot."

It sounds like a dairy advertisement of "milk from contented cows." It is the capitalist's viewpoint to a dot. Discontent interferes with production and, therefore, with profit. Seventy million individual working days were lost in England through strikes during the five years preceding the war. Seventy million days the cows did not produce.

The *British Review* divides laboring men into three classes: the low and inefficient type which needs stern discipline and compulsion; the intellectuals who because of "their large ideas and ready tongue are unsuitable for the workshops and no good for religion" and therefore should be suppressed by the government; and the ordinary man who "if well treated and not misled would cause no trouble." How to keep that ordinary animal from jumping the fence and breaking into the clover-patch—that's the problem.

Great Britain began speeding up in the nineties to meet the competition from the more submissive industrial slaves of the United States and Germany. Furnaces grew bigger and hotter; machines ran faster; material was made harder; appliances needed more strength and nerve for manipulation. Rest times were knocked off. Supervision was stricter. Still, with work intensified, food prices rose more rapidly than wages.

Labor politicians got into office on extravagant promises and could not make good. Whatever legislation was enacted did not pan out as expected. The Workmen's Compensation Act, providing the same insurance for the old and weak as for the young and strong, resulted in the old men being turned adrift and the younger ones speeded up. With the rush came more accidents. Accidents in shops doubled. The Minimum Wage Act resulted in a slave-driving supervision that went beyond human endurance.

No wonder labor grew turbulent, and the agitator went on agitating. Those that could not be destroyed frequently had the sting taken out of them by being elected to Parliament. Some of them became cabinet ministers dancing attendance upon the King, in black silk-knee breeches. Rubbing shoulders with "their betters," they became tarred with the same stick of conservatism. But in spite of their leaders, 200,000 miners struck in Wales, from where the navy gets its coal. Strikes in munition factories took place in spite of every effort of elected persons to keep the workers "contented."

Therefore the *British Review* reaches the conclusion that the first duty of statesmanship should be to enlist the power and influence of the British Unions. (We recommend the conclusion to the Los Angeles *Times*. Otis will throw a fit.) But Labor will not be placated even that way. The great fact that stares the British workmen in the face is that a few thousand men have an income of 1200 million pounds a year, while the sum total of wages doled out to the millions of workers amounts only to 600 million pounds.

The social economist of the *British Review* explains this condition by saying that "the foundation of great fortunes was gotten from the losses of unsuccessful capitalists and not from labor." How the unsuccessful capitalist had anything to lose that was not produced by labor, still remains a profound mystery to the *British Review*.

Until the workers in Great Britain and elsewhere abolish such conditions, the real labor problem is to make the toilers discontented with their lot.

Trapping Labor

IN THE EAST, the National Security League. In the West, the Pacific Coast Defense League. Back of both the munition manufacturers.

Between them they will squeeze the country for profits.

But without organized Labor they can't carry out their scheme. (If Labor only took the hint!) Therefore they are appealing to the trade unions to help.

The Pacific Coast Defense now comes to the rescue of organized Labor on this Coast. In its cabinet are high politicians, Governors, priests and sundry others,—all honorable gentlemen. There is power behind the scenes, for in a few short months they have succeeded in having all the Governors of the Western States, except Colorado, agree to make laws to prohibit the militia from shooting strikers during industrial struggles.

They want organized Labor to give the National Guard a clean bill of health, join them and be good patriots. In return they will get—a LAW.

Andrew J. Gallagher, a supervisor and prominent labor man in San Francisco, is also a "cabinet officer." He introduced the Pacific Coast Defense League to the regular meeting of the San Francisco Labor Council and spoke in favor of Labor co-operating to get this good law.

Paul Scharrenberg, a sailor, Secretary of the State Federation of Labor, said that he never had the nerve to introduce a proposition before a labor council that was so vague and indefinite.

Gallagher read letters from the President of the Pacific Coast Defense League—a Mr. Hanlon—whom nobody seems to know hereabouts; also from a number of Governors—all making generous promises. It was clear that all of a sudden, over night, as it were, the higherups feel awful about the way the militia has treated the poor working man in the past. Now once again the "Golden Rule" is here, they say, and they are sure the lion will lie down with the lamb.

Sad to relate, there seemed to be quite a number of delegates that fell for the plutes' war bunk. A few waxed warm and patriotic over the necessity for preparing to die for the bosses' land and country.

Of course, the *proposed* law already provides certain "exceptions" in which the militia may be used, as heretofore. Namely, in "race riots," against "sympathetic mobs," etc. Does any sensible worker doubt that when a real strike is on, when the strikers are burning down some obstruction or driving away rats and detectives, the government will not step in to "protect property" and use the loopholes of the proposed law to shoot down the workers and break the strike?

John O. Walsh, a molder, expressed in the Labor Council a sentiment that is growing among the workers. "If Labor must be prepared," he said, "let us form our own independent companies to defend ourselves against outsiders as well as against the militia."

A splendid suggestion. Let Labor take possession of the arms and ammunition they have produced. Let them form their own companies for their own protection. Then reconnoiter the vulnerable points of industry and transportation. Take charge of the mines and factories, and carry on production and distribution for the welfare of all instead of for the profit of the land barons and munition trusts.

Then, and not till then, will Labor deserve and command respect. That is the mission and dignity of Labor.

THE BLAST is the friend of labor, the friend of organized labor. But a satisfied silence is the bar to all progress, and THE BLAST intends, as a friend of labor, always to say exactly what it thinks, and it thinks there is not enough solidarity among labor.

A Troubled Moralist

ELLA WHEELER WILCOX, one of the guardians and purveyors of Hearst-made morality, has unburdened her god-fearing soul in "poetry" and prose over one of those dainty news morsels whereby William the Panderer caters to the degenerate taste of sensationalism. The case of Mrs. Mohr (accused of having hired two negroes to kill her husband, a physician who had made nearly a million as an abortionist for the society ladies of Newport and Providence) inspired Ella to bestride her Pegasus and ride over considerable territory, such as the earth, the universe, a couple of astral planes and other places inhabited by God and the Revealing Angels, whoever they are.

On a clamy excursion of this kind Ella naturally picks up a little astronomy. She informs us that "Our earth is making a circuitous journey toward a higher cycle, and just now it is passing through a zone of hate."

How delightfully simple! Here we have been getting grey-haired trying to place the blame for the row over in Europe. Statesmen have been publishing Blue Books, Green Books, and Books of every color of the rainbow, to assure us that their particular governments were as innocent as driven snow and that the guilt is on the other side. Now comes Ella and clears it all up. Kaisers, Czars, Kings and Capitalists, you are all absolved: the earth is in a hate-zone, a kind of fog-belt, as the lady-astronomer explains it.

Who steered the earth into this fog-belt, anyhow? Ella says "God is the captain of the ship." What's the use of blaming the crew, then?

Listen to further wisdom: "Unconsciously to themselves, no doubt, the hate-vibrations in the air had their effect upon the minds of all those involved in the Mohr tragedy." We most respectfully submit that such being the case, the two poor and friendless negroes should go free as well as the wealthy white lady. If their act was due to hate-vibrations in the air unconsciously received, it is absurd to punish them. Might as well hang a man for catching cold. "The murderous work," says the Hearstian soothsayer, "of Dr. Mohr put him in perfect accord with the hate-vibrations from the war-zone."

Our feeble intellect halts right here.

When a doctor has made nearly a million helping society ladies to maintain their shape, and has extended these operations for nearly a generation, these hate-vibrations from the war-zone seem somewhat belated, not to say entirely out-of-date.

The war is responsible for a lot of damphool things, but hardly for abortions in Newport.

Ella assures us in "poetry":

"All other sins may be condoned, forgiven,
"All other sinners may be cleaned and shriven;
"Not these, not these."

Now, that is really interesting. Such being the case, we suggest that Mrs. Wilcox stop this pernicious custom by acquainting her readers with Margaret Sanger.

"An ounce of prevention * * *"

Virtue Under Wagedom

J. K. Apelleby.

EVEN a Roman Lucretia would hardly be able to preserve her virtue in the conditions which compel so many American girls to shiver as they toil. Job would utterly lose his patience if he were compelled to enter the labor market and compete with the labor thieves in jail. The angel Gabriel would lose his angelhood in a month if he were compelled to live in an unventilated, fever-haunted tenement house, and had to keep himself, Mrs. Gabriel and half a dozen little Gabriels on 75 cents a day.

Overseas

Eastbourne, England,
February 5th, 1916.

THE event of the hour in the labor movement here in England is undoubtedly the Bristol Conference which has taken place during the last week of January. The most important feature of that conference is, beyond question, the twin resolutions which were proposed and adopted at one of its sittings.

The main business of the Conference was to discuss the Compulsion Bill. It did discuss it. And after a number of speeches delivered simultaneously from chairs, tables and platform, a resolution against the Bill was submitted to the delegates, and was carried by a majority of eight to one. Another resolution, asking the conference not to agitate for its repeal in case it becomes a law, was similarly carried although not by an equally large majority.

You think it queer, I suppose, and will probably wonder whether deciding not to agitate against a certain measure is really the best way of giving effect to your opposition to it. Perhaps not, from your point of view. But you Americans are living under happy, normal conditions. You are being oppressed and exploited as usual; your best friends and leaders, your Joe Hills and Schmidts and Caplans are torn away from you as usual; are persecuted, shot and imprisoned in quite the usual way, just as in the good old days of '87—everything proceeds with you as usual. But here conditions are different, certainly not *quite* normal. And under abnormal conditions all sorts of things will and are expected to happen.

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Besides, it is important to remember that this is essentially a war against militarism. But you cannot combat any evil without knowing the nature of that evil. So, in order that the people should thoroughly understand (and feel) what the cursed system they are sent abroad to destroy really is, those that have the interests of the country close at heart have decided that they could not do better than to have the same system firmly established at home.

This explains the meaning of the second note at the Bristol Conference. For so simple and logical is this expedient that even those that are against compulsion in principle have decided to do nothing that may hinder its being put into practice.

The government, needless to say, promptly availed themselves of the hint, and the Bill became an Act.

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Of course, there are many who refuse to see the wisdom of such proceedings. The I. L. P., for instance, is carrying on a vigorous agitation against the Act, and indeed against any form of compulsion whatever. There is also dissatisfaction and unrest among the organized workers, particularly in South Wales and on the Clyde. These simple people, who apparently cannot appreciate the good that is being done for them, have even threatened with strikes and strongly worded resolutions. Such unheard of ingratitude! Something will have to be done to silence them. And the best means whereby to obtain the necessary silence would certainly seem to be to make the military service Act applicable to industry. In other words, to introduce industrial conscription.

At any rate, that is the opinion of a very great and devoted friend of the people—Lloyd George. As one who has always entertained a true love for the workers, and is anxiously concerned about their happiness and well being, he is very much afraid that as long as there will remain to them a vestige of trade union rights and privileges, there will be strikes and threats of strikes, and the process of the dilution of labor by which he proposes to bring about "a future which has been the dream of many a great leader" will continually be hampered. Therefore by placing the worker on an equal footing and under the same obligations with the soldier, all these difficulties will be smothered out, and liberty and civilization forever secured.

It is doubtful, however, if the workers—ungrateful creatures that they are!—will ever appreciate such unselfish action on their behalf. —S. D.

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Carlton, Victoria, Australia,
January 24th, 1916.

Dear Comrade Berkman:—

I am sending a letter as I have not the time for an article by this mail. Propaganda here is very difficult owing to the War Precautions Act. The country is blood-mad. The frenzy of war is upon the people. The military is supreme and brutal to the last degree. The other day soldiers tarred and feathered a man who moved a resolution asking union men to ignore the recruiting card issued by the Labor Government. Recently I addressed an out-of-door meeting. There were present about ten thousand people. You can see by the enclosed newspaper clippings how brutally the soldiers attacked me, smashed the platform, burned the red flag and injured my back. Still I continued to speak until a sergeant of the army began to address the crowd, drowning my voice and compelling me to stop. I have been arrested, but the charges have been withdrawn by the police. I was speaking about recruiting. * * * As this letter may be opened and read, I cannot explain the facts without being arrested again.

Miss Adela Pankhurst was to speak at a meeting at the Bijou Theatre, but the soldiers rushed the platform and prevented the meeting being held.

The Labor Prime Minister advocates that force should be used against everybody who opposes militarism. A reign of terror exists at present. * * *

—J. W. Fleming